RTI and Systems Change

The Commitment

What *is* our future?

- "The best way to predict the future is to invent it."

- John Sculley, 1987

Picture this……..

A 2nd grade student transfers into your school from a nearby community. Test scores indicate her reading skills are significantly below grade level.

If you were this student's parent, what would you prefer happen?

What course of action is likely to be pursued to assist this student?

M. Beebe-Frankenberger 2006   Source: Callender (2005) RTI Overview

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Three Paths…..

- 1. The student receives additional assistance (i.e. reading lab, tutoring, additional instruction, help with homework)
- 2. The student is referred for a special education evaluation.
- 3. The student continues to struggle and teachers do the best they can to assist.

M. Beebe-Frankenberger 2006   Source: Callender (2005) RTI Overview

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Three Paths….. (cont'd)

- All 3 paths (options) are

    - **low probability occurrences**

    - **unlikely to bring about an increase in the student's reading skills (except by chance)**

    - **thus, unlikely to increase her long-term academic performance**

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Source: Callender (2005) RTI Overview

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Predicting the future in Montana:
The 4th Path – RTI *Process*

- Systematic screening for *all* students to identify those at risk for reading problems
- Formative assessment to inform specific skills requiring more intensive instruction
- School has a plan in place for
    - Strong core reading instruction
    - instructional intervention, given specific skill needs
    - monitoring progress frequently towards the goal
    - home-school collaboration
    - "exiting" intervention when goals are met
    - increasing intensity or type of intervention when little or no progress is made.

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Systems Change

"For every complex problem, there is a simple solution… that doesn't work."

(Mark Twain)

- Change….it takes
  - Leadership
  - Planning
  - Collaboration
  - Hard work…smart working
  - Courage
  - Time

And, even with planning, change is often messy………

What *You* Said About Change

- **Some "barriers" to change, identified in the RTI Acceptability survey taken in November, 2005……..**

  - Time for training and implementation

  - Lack of training and true understanding of the changes this process will take to implement.

  - Lack of resources for the staff to use to implement changes.

  - Question the readiness of the staff for such extensive changes.

  - Unwillingness to alter existing schedules and time for instruction

  - getting teachers "sold" on the new process, having parents respond positively to having their child "identified"

  - Any time you implement change, it impacts people and creates the perception that they are going to be required to do more work with few or no additional resources.

More……..
What *You* Said About Change

- Uncertainty as to what to do handle change well.
- Change is always a difficult process
- Getting all staff onboard with RtI
- Re-alignment of staff that will or can provide interventions.
- Recognition of the need for the program
- Patience with the process.
- Our thinking of special education services as the last stop in the intervention process.
- getting parents to commit to their part of the process
- none specific, there just always seems to be barriers
- **Wise words……..and consistent with what we know to be the case about change**

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How Important Changes Come About…..

- **Usually triggered by a catalyst (Carnine, 1999)**
  - **Increased diversity in student population**
  - **Global economic competitiveness**
  - **Educational performance = economic well-being in adulthood**

- **Education policy driven by both economic and political forces**
  - **REI (1986)**
  - **ESEA (reauth 1994)**
  - **NCLB (2002) and AYP**
  - **IDEiA (reauth 1997, 2004) and FAPE**
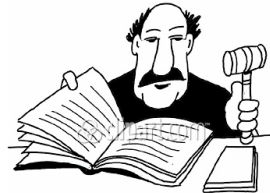
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Catalyst: Changing Contexts & Challenges

- **Changing Context**
  - Political, economic and social forces of today
  - "Nation At Risk" (1983)
    - "more and more young people emerge from high school ready neither for college nor for work."
  - NCLB – "Demographics are not Destiny" – close the gap!
- **Challenges**
  - Population increases "Baby Boom Echo"
  - Population Mobility = instability in schools
  - Students from more challenging contexts: increased poverty, increased violence, decreased early socialization
  - Increased cultural diversity; heterogeneity

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Ysseldyke et al., (1997) School Psychology: A Blueprint for the Future. NASP

Federal Acts as Catalyst for Change

- **Regular Education Initiative (REI; 1986)**
  - General and special education begin looking at shared roles and shared responsibilities
    - Fragmented approach to service delivery
    - Dual system of segregated services (GEN and SPED)
    - Stigmatizing labels
- **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA; reauth 1994)**
  - Standards based reform at a state level
  - Accountability: reporting and assessment
  - State required to develop state standards, benchmarks, and assessments

Source: "Response to Intervention: New Ways of Thinking About Assessment and Intervention", David Tilly, August, 2005

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Federal Acts as Catalyst for Change

– **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; 2002)**
  - Hold states, school districts, and schools accountable for educating *all* children to high academic standards
    – Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
    – *All* students proficient in reading and math by 2014
  - Greater parental and student choice in education
  - Flexibility for educators and administrators
  - A focus on "scientifically based research"
  - Title 1 (PL 107-110) "The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments."

Source: "Response to Intervention: New Ways of Thinking
About Assessment and Intervention", David Tilly, August, 2005

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Federal Acts as Catalyst for Change

– **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; reauth 2004) – to ensure:**
  - *all* children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living

  - that the rights of children with disabilities and parents of such children are protected

  - assistance to States in the implementation of a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families

  - that educators and parents have the necessary tools to improve educational results for children with disabilities

  - assessment of the effectiveness of efforts to educate children w/disab.

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Source: "Response to Intervention: New Ways of
Thinking About Assessment and Intervention", David
Tilly, August, 2005

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And yet………….

- **The real catalyst may be…**

   ……the student who can't "get" basic reading skills….or

   the 9th grader who gets low grades in spite of great effort and parent support….but who doesn't "qualify" for help

   ………………………….. What/Who is *your* catalyst?

Need to Campaign for Reform
(Carnine, 1999)

- **Need to *campaign* for systemic reform**

   – Campaign prior to change to attain majority consensus to change in a specific direction

   – Campaign = "aggressive action toward a specific purpose that is concrete, comprehensible, and to some degree <u>urgent</u>" (p. 3)

Six Steps of a Campaign
(Carnine, 1999)

- Target visible problems that are *important* and of *broad interest*
- Establish a coalition of groups *dedicated* to the issue
- *Credible leadership* to ensure critical mass
- Staffing the campaign to lobby, disseminate information
- Assemble the right information
- Launch the campaign with an *expectation for a specific goal or outcome*

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Your Comments about RTI

- **Some "comments" about RTI, identified in the RTI Acceptability survey taken in November, 2005……..**

- RtI seems very exciting if it is as it appears. The need/desire of teachers to help the students caught in the "crack" is significant, at least in our district.

- Bring on Rti with a passion for impacting the positive changes in the basic skills for our students....we are going to have success with this method and become advocates for the process!!

- I think that if everyone gets on board, it will be a great thing.

- It looks very promising and seems to enhance the process we already have.

- I am very much in favor of its implementation as I find it favorable to the "wait to fail" model we currently use.

- It's a great step!

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That's the campaign spirit!
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Educational Reform
(Grimes & Tilly, 1996)

- Requires building "capacity" and support for school systems to adopt new practices
  - Work directly with systems, policy makers, and important stakeholders to facilitate *lasting* change

- School improvement reform requires;
  - *Improvement* established as the school's direction (mission)
  - Agency personnel contribute to new policy to guide services
  - Leadership provides ongoing support for innovative practices
  - Staff develop essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes
  - Agency procedures, goals, roles, and assignments are aligned with the change (p. 466)

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Systems Change

- **Phase 1: Creating Readiness –**
  - enhancing the climate for change
- **Phase 2: Initial Implementation –**
  - guidance and support structures are utilized to carry out implementation in stages
- **Phase 3: Institutionalization**
  - ensure infrastructure in place to sustain change
- **Phase 4: Ongoing Evolution**
  - Develop mechanisms for feedback to improve quality and support in the face of new challenges

Source: Adelman & Taylor (1997) from Merrell, Ervin, & Gimpel (2006)

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Phase 1: Creating Readiness – Scaling Up for Implementation

- **Vision**
  - Desired outcomes of change
  - Anticipated costs and incentives
- **Leadership**
  - Policy commitment
  - Informed and voluntary consent for participation
  - Policy framework: nonnegotiable policies and components stated clearly and up front

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Source: Taylor, Nelson & Adelman (1999) from Merrell, Ervin, & Gimpel (2006)

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Phase 1: Creating Readiness – Scaling Up for Implementation

- **Infrastructure Redesign**
  - Ensures ownership, support, participation
  - 5 fundamental components:
    - Governance
    - Planning and implementation of specific organizational and program objectives
    - Coordination and integration
    - Daily leadership
    - Communication and information management

Source: Taylor, Nelson & Adelman (1999) from Merrell, Ervin, & Gimpel (2006)

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Caution…………

- Failure to establish "readiness" in Phase 1:
  - Implement *form* rather than *substance* of change
  - Can lead to resistance to change
  - Lack of understanding leading to poor implementation
  - Fault-finding behaviors

- **Phase 1 = FOUNDATION**

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Phase 2: Initial Implementation –

- Temporary mechanisms established
  - Provide guidance and support as prototype is adapted and phased into the system. These mechanisms are:
  - 1: site-based "steering" team to guide implementation
  - 2: on-site facilitator monitors implementation and refocuses "steering" team, if needed.
  - 3: Mentors and coaches are trained to model and teach elements of the new system.

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Phase 2: Initial Implementation –

- Emphasis on "capacity" building
  - Intensive coaching and mentorship
  - Follow-up consultation
  - Technical assistance
- Use of formative assessment – feedback about:
  - Implementation progress:
    - Acceptability, implementation integrity
  - Changes in process:
    - Planning processes, governance structures, policies and resources
    - Initial outcomes, e.g. student outcomes

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Source: Taylor, Nelson & Adelman (1999)
from Merrell, Ervin, & Gimpel (2006)

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Phase 3: Institutionalization

- Infrastructure in place to maintain implementation over time
- Create mechanisms to address changes in contextual demands.
- Critical mass of team members for broad base involvement and manageable workload.
- Adequate resources:
  - Time, technical support, recognition of participation and success, ongoing professional development
- Create mechanisms for ongoing "capacity building"
  - "booster" trainings (yearly)
  - Training for new staff

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Source: Taylor, Nelson & Adelman (1999)
from Merrell, Ervin, & Gimpel (2006)

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Phase 4: Ongoing Evolution

- "Ongoing evolution of programs is the product of efforts to account for accomplishments, deal with changing times and conditions, incorporate new knowledge, and create a sense of renewal as the excitement of newness wears off and the demands of change sap energy (Taylor et al, 1999, p. 319)
- The KEY to fostering Ongoing Evolution = Data
  - formative and summative evaluation.
  - Establish a program evaluation team
  - Caution: positive attitude towards program evaluation (not about accountability)

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Source: Taylor, Nelson & Adelman (1999) from Merrell, Ervin, & Gimpel (2006)

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Here's Some Clues……..
About What to Do!

- See "Tilly's 10 ways to mess up or succeed in systems change"

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Write Your School's
RTI Mission Statement

- Express your school's purpose that inspires support and ongoing commitment
- Motivate those who are connected to the school
- Be articulated in a way that is convincing and easy to grasp
- Use proactive verbs to describe what you do
- Be free of jargon
- Be short enough so that anyone connected to the school can readily understand and repeat it.

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Remember………..

- *The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.*

Michaelangelo

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